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The Origin and real Name of NIN-IB.—By ALBERT T. CLAY,
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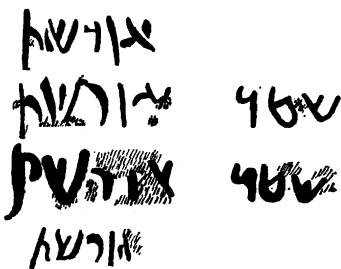
FOR years it has been recognized by most scholars that the name of the Babylonian deity which is written NIN-IB in Sumerian was pronounced differently by the Semites. Among the names proposed may be mentioned Adar, Nin-dar, Nin-rag, Nin-Urash and Nisroch. In *Business Documents of Murashū Sons* (BE. vol. x), I published the Aramaic equivalent for the Sumerian NIN-IB, which is אֲנִישׁתָּחַ. Before finding an additional tablet on which the Aramaic was found, there seemed to be some doubt whether the middle character should read נ or ש, but after finding another example, I argued, in the preface of my volume, for the reading נ, which, as will be seen below, must now be regarded as definitive. The Aramaic, however, instead of solving the problem, seemed to make the obscurity which hung over the pronunciation still more dense. As regards the vocalization of these characters, and the identification of the god with what is known, I offered no explanation in vol. x, nor in my *Light on the Old Testament from Babel*, p. 400.

Professor Hilprecht, in his editorial preface to my *Murashū*, vol. x, as well as in an article in the *Sunday School Times*, Sept. 25, 1904, took exception to my reading and read the characters אֲנִירְשָׁתָח, and proposed comparison with NIN-SHAH “lord of the boar”=the Syriac נָאָרְשָׁתָח=the Biblical Nisroch. The Syriac form, however, was misread by him and should be נָאָרְשָׁתָח (cf. Jastrow, *Rel. Bab. und Ass.* vol. i, p. 451), which of course makes the comparison impossible. Further, the final character of the Aramaic of NIN-IB is not ח but שׁ, as I had maintained. With this every other scholar who has commented upon the name (see below) has agreed. And, as I had stated, as will be seen below, also the middle character is not ר but נ.

Professor Zimmern, as reported by Professor Hilprecht in the *Sunday School Times* (Sept. 25, 1904), read: *b l p r sh t = bel pirišti* “Lord of decision.” Professor Prince in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* (Vol. 1905, p. 55), followed, in reading: *Enu réshtu*, “The chief lord.” Dr. Pinches, about

the same time, in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (Jan. 1905), read *En-resheth*=*Enu réshtu* "The primæval lord." Professor Johns, *Expository Times* (Dec. 1904), p. 141, read *Urashtu*, and on p. 141 *ibid.* *Arashtu*. Professor Sayee, in the same Journal (Dec. 1904), regarded it as equivalent to the Assyrian *In-arishti* "Lord of the mitre," the Sumerian for *Nin-Urash*. In the *Revue Sémitique* (1905, p. 93), Professor Halévy offered the reading, *En napishti* "Lord of life," or preferably *En-nawashti*=*En-nammashhti* "seigneur de tout ce qui est doué de vie et de mouvement, de toute creature animée." Later (cf. *ibid.* p. 180), the same scholar offered two other explanations: *en-rishati* "seigneur de l'allégresse," and *en-arishti*, "seigneur du vêtement princier nommé *arishtu*." Professor Jensen (*Gilgamesh Epos*, p. 87) read and interpreted the character '*enwusht*=*namushtu*=*namurtu*', with which he compared the Biblical Nimrod. Besides Jensen and Halévy,¹ of those who have published their views, Lidzbarski is the only scholar who has accepted the reading (cf. *Ephemeris*, vol. ii, p. 203).

In the forthcoming *William Rainey Harper Memorial Volumes* the writer will publish in full the Aramaic endorsements of the Murashû archives. For our present purpose the following reproductions of the Aramaic for NIN-IB, which appeared in *Murashû*, vol. x, p. xviii, will suffice.



¹ Three other explanations were sent me in private communications, *Irrishtu* the feminine of *Irrishu* "farmer," *en erishti* "lord of decision," and an identification with the Persian word for the planet Saturn, cf. *nivishti* *hudâ* "the prescience of god" or *nuwashtan* "to go far away," due to the long course of Saturn. Inasmuch as I have not consulted the writers with reference to the publication of their views, I withhold their names.

The middle character is surely **ו** and not **ר**, as stated heretofore. The character in the first example is found in other Aramaic endorsements, Cf. also the different forms of **ו** in Lidzbarski, *Nordsem. Epig., Atlas*. In the second example, it can only be **ו**, as well as in the fourth. Conclusive proof that it is **ו** is to be found in the second example. We have only to refer to the **ר** in **שְׁטָר**, and in **כְּרָב** in the next line of the endorsement, cf. *Murashû*, vol. x, p. 87; to see that it is not the character in question. The explanations of Jensen and Halévy are the only ones, therefore, that can be considered of those that have been published. The changes in Jensen's equation *enwusht* = *Nimrod*, while perhaps not without parallel, are rather too numerous, it seems to me, to inspire much confidence. *En-nammashti* "Lord of every living creature," the suggestion of Halévy, would be too difficult to explain in the light of the god's attributes with which we are familiar.

At the time of publishing the Aramaic equivalent found in the Murashû archives, about three years ago, I had in mind a number of theories, some of which have since been published by others, but which did not seem sufficiently satisfactory to warrant me in stating them. I am now prepared, however, to propose the reading *Enmashtu* for the characters **אנְמַשְׁתָּה**, the Aramaic **ו**, as is known, representing *m* in Babylonian.¹

There seems to be no end to identifications of NIN-IB with other deities. Besides Nergal and Ningirsu of Telloh, there are *EN-TUR-DA* (perhaps *En-banda*), *APIN*, *MASH-MASH*, *Madanunu*, *Halkalla*, *Tishbu*, *Adaene*, *Shushinak*, *Dakbak*, etc. The last three are said to belong to Elam (cf. *II R.* 57: 47, 48, 49c). In view of this, the possibility that NIN-IB originally came from that region deserves consideration, particularly when it is borne in mind that the second element *Mashti* of *En-Mashti* could be associated with **וִשְׁתִּי** in the book of Esther, which in Babylonian would be written *Mashti*.² The fact that Esther was a Persian queen would

¹ Cf. *Amurru* written **אֲמֻרָּע**, or *Shamash* written **שְׁמַשְׁתָּה**, *Murashû*, vol. x, p. 8 and 9.

² Cf. Justi (*Handbuch der Zendsprache*, p. 272), who considers *Washti* an old Persian word *vahista* "best." Jensen (*Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, vi, p. 51; cf. also KAT.³, p. 485), calls attention to a deity *Mashti* (cf. Layard, p. 31: 11, etc.).

make the identification of *Washti*¹ highly probable, but the identification of *En-mashtu* (NIN-IB) with *Masti*=*Washti* gives rise to difficulties, which become all the more striking when we take into consideration the meaning of the Sumerian *EN*, and the fact that *Masti* is the name of an Elamite goddess.

After careful consideration of all the conditions involved I beg to present a solution of the problem which I think will answer all the requirements, namely, the equation *En-Mashtu*=*En-Martu*=*Bēl-Amurru*. In other words, NIN-IB was called *EN-MAR-TU*², the god *par excellence* of the West land. For the change of *r* to *sh*, cf. *shipishti* for *shipirti* in the Murashū Documents; the Neo-Babylonian name *Mashtuku*, written *Martuku* in the Cassite period; also the deity *Ashka'iti*=*Arka'iti*, and the article by Jensen, ZA. vii, p. 179. For an exact parallel to *EN-MARTU*=*Bēl-Amurru*, cf. *EN-KAS*=*Bēl-Harrān*, in the name index of Johns, *Deeds and Documents*, and *Doomsday-Book*.

The god NIN-IB, as can be inferred from the Tel el-Amarna tablets, played an important rôle in Palestine in the latter half of the second millennium B.C. The name of the deity occurs in the Western Semitic proper name *Abdi-NIN-IB*. According to the collation of Knudtzon (cf. BA. iv, p. 114) there was also a city called *atū NIN-IB*. But more important than all else is the name of a place or temple in or near Jerusalem called *Bit-NIN-IB*. In view of this, the question, therefore, arises whether NIN-IB is not to be regarded as an Amorite deity?

¹ In this connection a personal name, *Ash-ta-Ma-ash-ti* (Johns, *Deeds and Documents*, 159 : 3), becomes especially interesting, the element *Ashta*, "friend," being Avestan for *Āστyā*, which is the name of a satrap of Peukelaotis (cf. Justi, *Iranisches Namebuch*, p. 47b). Cf. also the name *Ash-tu* in BE. vol. xv, 20, II, 10.

² The use of the Sumerian EN in the actual pronunciation of the name up to the latest times, is paralleled by the use of Ellil (cf. my "Ellil the god of Nippur," in the forthcoming number of AJSL.) as the name of the foremost Nippurian deity. That *n* did not assimilate to the following *m* is to be explained, either in connection with the law of dissimilation by the substitution of *n* for a double consonant, cf. *iṣsanundu*=*iṣsanuddu*, or cf. *ittānanmar*=*ittanā'mar*, (Del., *Ass. Gram.*² p. 130), or *EN* was Babylonianized into *Enu*=*Enu-Mashtu*.

It seems reasonably certain that NIN-IB is not indigenous in Babylonia, an inference suggested already by the many gods regarded as equivalents. On the other hand, when the worship of the god was introduced into Babylonia, it would be natural to give a Babylonian designation; and since we have evidence for the existence of a god *IB*, it is plausible to assume that this deity had something to do with the appellation assigned to the foreign deity, namely NIN-IB. The element *NIN-IB* was at first associated with *IB*¹ as a kind of a consort.² In view of the peculiar conception prevailing in the early period of the Semites regarding the association of two gods, one as a superior and the other as a complement, we are not restricted in considering NIN-IB, even in this early age, necessarily as the wife, but in a general way we can regard the deity as the companion.³ Later, like Nin-Girsu of Telloh and others, the deity became masculinized.⁴ In this connection we are reminded of the group of gods in Harper's *Letters* (vol. iv, No. 358) where *NIN-IB* follows *NIN-IB* in the list of deities containing five gods with their female consorts. This, of course, may be an error on the part of the scribe (though a remarkable one), or it is due to the understanding that the god and his consort bore one and the same name. Cf. also *III R.* 69: 5a-b, where NIN-IB is said to be a god and a goddess. In connection with this it is interesting to note that among the terra-cotta images of deities found at Nippur, which hold in their hands the emblem of NIN-IB,⁵

¹ NIN-IB was long ago explained by Jeremias, "Lord of Ib," cf. Muss-Arnold, *Ass. Dic.*, p. 693.

² Later, however, in Dilbat, *MAMA* seems to be *IB*'s counterpart, cf. *Hammurabi Code III*, 22-29, and also *NIN-E-GAL*, cf. the Boundary Stone of Marduk-apal-iddin, *Del. en Perse*, vi, p. 37.

³ In the Cassite period there is a feminine name *Shar-hat-NIN-IB*, cf. BE. vol. xv, 185:9. If the first element is regarded a verbal form, then NIN-IB is very probably the subject.

⁴ On the transformation of the sex of deities, cf. Barton, *Semitic Origins*.

⁵ Professor Hilprecht regarded them as Bēl (i. e. Enlil) and Bēltis (Ninlil); cf. *Explorations in Bible Lands*, p. 528 and note 5. The symbol which seems to be that of NIN-IB, speaks against such an identification. Cf. Hinke, *A New Boundary Stone of Nebuchadrezzar*, Chap. I, and my remarks in the forthcoming number of AJSL on "Ellil the god of Nippur."

some wear beards and others do not. In later periods, NIN-IB as a rule was considered to be a masculine deity, and Gula, or Nin-Karrag, was his consort.

We find another Amorite deity in Babylonia who is called *MARTU=Amurru*,¹ bearing the same name as the land. There also continued to exist as late as the Achæmenian period a deity written *KUR-GAL=Amurru*² (cf. my BE. vol. x, p. 8, and vol. xiv, p. viii), who at one time had been regarded as an equivalent to Ellil. *MARTU* and *KUR-GAL* doubtless were one and the same god. It may be, therefore, that NIN-IB was originally the chief goddess of the Amorite land, and *MARTU* (or *IB* perhaps) the chief god, and that later, if the theory here proposed is correct, after *NIN-IB* had become masculinized in Babylonia, the deity was considered the god *par excellence* of the Amorite land, i. e., *Bél-Amurru*. When, therefore, the Babylonian language became the *lingua franca* in the second millennium B.C., the Western Semites, in writing the name of the chief deity, used the ideogram *NIN-IB*; for it is singularly striking that, while many names in the Babylonian contracts are compounded with *MAR-TU* (i. e. *Amurru*) in the Hammurabi and Cassite periods, and with *KUR-GAL* (also = *Amurru*) in the late period, and while in the Amarna letters, Dagon, Molech, Addu, Ishtara (*Ashirta*), *NIN-IB*, and perhaps other deities of Palestine and Syria are represented, there should not be a single name compounded with *Amurru* in the Amarna tablets.³ All these considerations lead to the suggestion that perhaps NIN-IB represented in these letters *Amurru* the chief god of the Amorites, or rather the *Bél-Amurru*, who may have borne the same name as the land, like the god Ashur of Assyria, cf. *Bél-Harrán*, *Bélit-Bâbili*, etc. That being true, the suggestion that *Bit-NIN-IB* was used in an appellative sense, and corresponded to the term *Béth-El*,

¹ For the reading *MAR-TU = Amurru*, cf. Meissner, *Seltene Assyrische Ideogramme*, No. 4137.

² The name *Buzur-Amurru* (*KUR-GAL*), not *Buzur-Bél*, the pilot of the ship in the Babylonian deluge story, considered in connection with the question of the possible Semitic origin of this part of the Gilgamesh epic (cf. my *Light on the Old Testament from Babel*, p. 75), becomes especially interesting.

³ Unless perhaps *Ūru = Avurru = Amurru*, in the name *Uru-milki*.

“House of God,”¹ is especially striking. In this connection cf. the interesting title of an individual on his seal: *warad DIN-GIR-DINGIR-MAR-TU*, (Strassmaier, *Warka*, 45, 54, etc.) This, as Professor Jastrow has suggested, appears to be the *pluralis majestatis*, which, in connection with *Amurru* (*MAR-TU*), may be intended to represent the chief deity of the Amorites,² and is to be compared with אֱלֹהִים as a generic designation for the god of the Hebrews.³

This suggests the inquiry, when was this god *En-Mashtu* (NIN-IB) introduced into Babylonia? At the time of the first dynasty of Babylon, the personal names show that the country was filled with foreigners, notably Arabians and Western Semites; cf. Ranke, *Personal Names*. The ruling dynasty at Babylon was surely Arabian,⁴ as is indicated by the names of the kings. In the Cassite period these foreign elements have practically disappeared (cf. my BE. vol. xiv, p. 3). In the Achæmenian period, as a result of the Babylonish captivity, the country is again filled with foreigners. The question also arises, do we have any light as to how the Western Semites came to live in Babylonia during the reign of the so-called Hammurabi dynasty? It is very probable that certain cities had been occupied by them for centuries, where they maintained their name and cult, adapted to their new surroundings. It is also not improbable that among the names occurring in the business documents, so many of which have an Arabian or Aramaic aspect, there are those who were transported as captives to Babylonia, or their descendants, as in Assyrian times.⁵ Taking into consideration the fact that in the Cassite period the West Semitic element is no longer seen in the proper names, we are led to the conclusion that either “waves of immigration” continued during the two

¹ Cf. KAT.³, p. 411; also Haupt, *Independent*, Jan. 12, 1899.

² Cf. the conclusions at which Professor Barton arrived with reference to *AN-MESH* in the Amarna letters, namely, that it is equivalent to אֱלֹהִים (cf. Proc. AOS., 1892, p. cxvii).

³ Muss-Arnold (*Ass. Dic.*, p. 695) says “the Assyrian scribe substituted the name of the Assyrian deity Ninib for the Canaanitish Jahweh.”

⁴ Cf. also Weber's recent article in OLZ. on *Der Name Hammurabi in einer südarabischen Inschrift*, 1907, p. 146.

⁵ That this custom was practiced in the third millennium B.C. can be inferred from the fact that the Elamite Chedorlaomer, in Genesis 14:16, not only carried away Lot, but women and people as well.

millenniums prior to the time of the first dynasty; or that the people of the West at certain times were able to conquer Babylonia; or that there were centers, which for centuries the Semites held, and where they developed what we recognize as Semitic Babylonian. Reaching backward into antiquity, we have here and there sporadic survivals of Semitic domination, but our horizon is yet too short to ascertain how the Semitic elements came to be introduced into Babylonia. Akkad seems to have been one of those early centers, as is indicated by the inscriptions and the names of the rulers; for example, Shargâni-shar-âli and Narâm-Sin. Cf. especially the name Lipush-Iaum,¹ the granddaughter of Narâm-Sin. In this connection we recall the fact that the ideogram usually meaning "Akkad" has also the meaning *Ur̄tu* and *Amurrū* (cf. Weissbach, *Miscellen*, p. 29). In other words, the Semites who settled in Babylonia are known as the people of the country "Akkad," the cuneiform ideogram for which land has also the meaning "Armenia" and "Ammorite land," although these countries also had their own names in Sumerian, namely *Tilla* and *Ari*. And this fact, as has been held by others, points to those regions as the origin of the Semites.

The names of the kings of the Isin dynasty² seem to show Western Semitic influence and the capital was doubtless a stronghold of this people. In the first name, *Ish-bi-Ur-ra*, *Ishbi* is probably a West Semitic element; cf. *Ja-ash-bi-i-la*, Ranke, *Personal Names*, p. 114. *Ishbi* could be a Babylonian-

¹ In my *Light on the Old Testament from Babel*, p. 238, I should have mentioned also this name as occurring before the time of Moses. *Iau* here is the exact form in which the divine name Jahweh appears in the Assyrian inscriptions when it is compounded with other elements: cf. *ibid.*, pp. 238 and 241. Until, therefore, we have reasons for explaining the name differently, we must assume that the divine name was known in this early age.

² Cf. the list published by Hilprecht, BE. vol. xx, pl. 1. The facts gained from this chronological fragment are especially interesting and important, because it is known that the Isin dynasty was overthrown by Rim-Sin, the Elamite ruler of Southern Babylonia, which took place in the 17th year of Sin-muballit, the father of Hammurabi. If this event marks the close of the Isin dynasty, it becomes a simple matter to restore the chronology backwards as far as covered by the list. Reckoning the first year of Hammurabi at 2100 B.C., the beginning of Ur-NIN-IB's reign would be about 2328 B.C., and Ur-Engur's about 2445 B.C.

ized form of this foreign element. The next name *Gimil-ilishu* is Babylonian. *Idin-Dagan* contains the name of the Palestinian god Dagon, which is found a little earlier in the date of the 37th year of Dungi, where a temple dedicated to Dagon is mentioned. *Ishme-Dagan*, his son, follows. It is, of course, not impossible that *Idin* and *Ishme* are Babylonianized forms of נִין and עֲשָׂמֵן, well known as elements in West Semitic names. *Ur-NIN-IB* follows the Babylonian name *Libit-Ishtar*, both of which, however, contain the names of Western Semitic deities. The first occurrence of the god NIN-IB that I have been able to find is little earlier. It is in the title of the first year of Dungi: *MU USH E NIN-IB KI-BA-A-GAR*. “The year the foundation of the temple NIN-IB was laid” (cf. Thureau-Dangin, *Inscr. de Sumer et d’Akkad*, p. 330). From this it would be reasonable to conjecture that the deity was well known in Babylonia even centuries before this time. *Ur* of *Ur-NIN-IB*, which in Babylonian means *amēl*, may also be West Semitic, cf. *Uru-milki* or *Milki-uru*. After *Bur-Sin*, his son, there follow a number of names more or less uncertain as to their reading, most of which appear to be foreign. Inasmuch as the names of their ancestors are not given, it has been properly assumed that most of them were usurpers.

Beneath the pavement laid by *Ur-NIN-IB* in the Temple Court of Nippur, Doctor Haynes found hundreds of fragments of votive vases, statues, etc., which had been dedicated to Ellil, centuries earlier. This clearly points to a disaster which befell the temple, and, doubtless, the city. Professor Hilprecht in BE. vol. i, pt. 2, attributed this to Kudur-Nankhundi (c. 2285 B.C.). In *Explorations in Bible Lands*, p. 380, he considered that it was done by the Elamites on a “first Elamitic invasion which occurred about two hundred years before the second one.” This is his present view,¹ with the exception that he makes the first invasion 125 years earlier than the second. He also raises the question “whether these two invasions are only two known phases of that great political movement and migration of natives, etc.” He considers also that it was at this time that the buildings in the mounds south of the temple were destroyed, where on the last campaign Doctor Haynes had found thousands of clay tablets, mostly fragmentary. As far as I can

¹ Cf. BE. vol. xx, pt. i, p. 54.

ascertain, there is no evidence to show that the ancient enemy of Babylonia, the Elamites, invaded the land in the third millennium B.C., prior to Kudur-Nankundi. Neither is there evidence that the tablets of the temple school in the mound south of the temple were destroyed prior to *Ur-NIN-IB*. The circumstance that the vase and statue fragments were found beneath *Ur-NIN-IB*'s pavement in the temple area, would imply that the disaster took place prior to or in *Ur-NIN-IB*'s reign. If it should prove to have occurred immediately before, I would suggest the probability of an Amorite invasion at this time, perhaps headed by *Ur-NIN-IB*, though it is equally probable that it could have taken place some time earlier than *Ur-NIN-IB*, and we should thus be led back to the beginning of this Semitic dynasty. However this may be, Isin is one of the early Semitic centers; and it becomes, therefore, highly probable that during the reign of this dynasty, the Western Semitic elements, occurring in the nomenclature of the tablets of the first dynasty of Babylon, were brought into Babylonia.

[Since reading this paper at the meeting of the American Oriental Society in Philadelphia, April 5th of this year, the interesting articles of Dr. Ranke and Professor Meissner in OLZ., March, 1907, have reached me. Ranke calls attention to a date on a tablet, which is written in Semitic. It reads *shattum sha Li-bi-it-Ishtar A-mu-ru-um it-ru-du-ush*, "In the year in which *Amurum* drove away *Libit-Ishtar*." His suggestion that this probably refers to the Amorites, who at the time invaded Babylonia, agrees with the theory set forth above, and may be said to furnish a confirmation of it. Ranke's rendering of the date, with its important reference to an interference on the part of the Amorites in the affairs of Babylonia, deserves the preference over that of Meissner, who would render the passage as referring probably to *Amurum*, a city near Sippara. The fact that *Libit-Istar*, neither in this nor in another passage, has the title "king," is not a sufficient reason for questioning the identification. We would hardly expect to find a date recording the fact that an appointed governor, or any one else but a king, was driven out. If, therefore, *Libit-Ishtar* is the name of a king, *Amurum* can only refer to the people, and we have a specified time when the Amorites entered Babylonia.]